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ABSTRACT

The Schenectady Intensive Reading Instructional Teams (I. R. I. T.) Program, funded under the Elementary Secondary Education Act Title III, is designed to provide intensive reading instruction to 135 students from eight elementary schools in the district. The students, mostly third and some fourth graders, are nominated by their classroom teachers and come to I. R. I. T. in need of special reading help. The school year is divided into three ten-week cycles with each cycle serving 45 children. The team comprises three reading teachers, a director, and a secretary. Each teacher is responsible for instructing one of the three I. R. I. T. reading areas: decoding, vocabulary and comprehension, and individualized reading. Mornings in the I. R. I. T. Program are spent on instruction. The 45 students are divided into three heterogeneous groups of 15. Each teacher spends a period of one hour with each of the three groups. The groups rotate to a new teacher for each period so that each student gets three periods of reading instruction, one period of instruction for each of the three I. R. I. T. reading areas. Afternoons are used by the team teachers for preparation, coordination, and professional development, while the students return to regular classrooms in their home schools. The understanding and approval of parents are important to the success of I. R. I. T. (Author/JM)

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I. PROJECT TITLE: Intensive Reading Instructional Teams

II. LOCATION: Dr. Martin Luther King School, Stanley St., Schenectady, N.Y. 12307

III. SOURCE AND LEVEL OF FUNDING: Title III, ESEA, Section 306, PIPS Project Information Packages

IV. PROGRAM START DATE: June 1975

V. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

The Intensive Reading Instructional Teams grant was awarded to the Schenectady School District for the 1974-75 school year. The main objective of the award was to replicate an I.R.I.T. Program that has been going on in Hartford, Connecticut for the past seven years.

The Schenectady I.R.I.T. Program is located at Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary School. It is designed to provide intensive reading instruction to 135 students from eight elementary schools in the district. The students, mostly 3rd and some 4th graders, are nominated by their classroom teachers and come to I.R.I.T. in need of special reading help. The school year is divided into three ten-week cycles with each cycle serving 45 children.

The team is comprised of three reading teachers, a director, and a secretary. Each teacher is responsible for instructing one of the three I.R.I.T. reading areas: decoding, vocabulary and comprehension, and individualized reading.

Mornings in the I.R.I.T. Program are spent on instruction. The 45 students are divided into three heterogeneous groups of fifteen. Each teacher spends a period of one hour with each of the three groups. The groups rotate to a new teacher for each period so that each student gets three periods of reading instruction, one period of instruction for each of the three I.R.I.T. reading areas.

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Afternoons are used by the team teachers for preparation, coordination, and professional development, while the students return to regular classrooms in their home schools. Typical afternoon activities for I.RI.T. teachers include correcting daily papers, updating student folders, preparing individualized lesson plans, developing original instructional materials, coordinating individualized lessons with other team members, meeting with classroom teachers, meeting with parents, participating in in-service training activities, reviewing new teaching materials, and selecting students for the next cycle.

The criteria for selection of students for I.R.I.T. is as follows:

1. Children will be recommended who are below grade level in reading achievement.

2. Children must be able to work successfully within an intensive program and adapt to the organizational set-up.

3. No pupil should be recommended who is now attending the English as a second language or special education programs.

4. Experience has indicated that preference should be given to students who have a good attendance record.

5. Guidelines to be used for selection of students should include information found in the cumulative folders, teacher evaluations, and principal and reading consultant recommendations.

6. Although the teachers are requested to recommend for consideration as many children as they feel would benefit from this type of instruction, it must be clearly understood that not all of the recommended children can be accepted in this program at any one time.

The understanding and approval of parents are important to the success of I.R.I.T., both to insure support for project continuation and to provide a source of out-of-school encouragement for students. In Schenectady, a serious effort is made to involve parents in the teaching process so that learning will

continue outside of the I.R.I.T. classroom.

Activities for parents are primarily the responsibility of Team members with the Project Director supervising and also playing an active role in many cases. I.R.I.T. parent involvement includes:

1. Notification of selection to parents of I.R.I.T. students
2. Parent meeting early in the cycle to explain I.R.I.T.
3. Open house showing student work and activities
4. Suggestions on helping children learn to read, written and reproduced by Teams
5. A student-written newspaper, or collection of student work
6. Written reports of student progress
7. Evaluation forms for feedback from parents (to be instituted 1975-76)
8. Graduation ceremony

Cost

Initial implementation costs for the 1974-75 school year were $97,344.00. The proposed cost requested for the 1975-76 school year will be $67,120.00. We are requesting a continuation of the grant at this cost.

VI. EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS:

For the 1974-75 school year the I.R.I.T. Program in Schenectady was evaluated by Stanford Research Institute, 333 Ravenswood Avenue, Menlo Park, California 94025. Their primary responsibility was to determine the over-all effectiveness of the I.R.I.T. Program. Evaluation evidence for the effectiveness of the Program will be provided by the Stanford Research Institute to the Title III Division.

The I.R.I.T. staff in Schenectady has also evaluated the Program to determine the statistical significance of gains made by students in each of the 10-week cycles during the school year. Instruments used by the I.R.I.T. staff were:

1. the California Achievement Test, level 2, both Forms A and B
2. the Botel Phonic Inventory

For each of the three cycles a pre-test, post-test design was used, i.e. students were pre-tested at the beginning of the cycle, and then post-tested at the conclusion of the 10-week instructional period. All evidence, at this time, appears to indicate that a majority of the students are excelling beyond normal expectations. Analysis of test scores using the California Achievement Test have shown that the level of significance of student gains for total reading ability, comprehension, and vocabulary is at both the .01 and .05 levels of significance as determined by T-Testing.

To determine statistical level of significance for the improvement of students in the I.R.I.T. Program, pre-test, expected post-test, and actual post-test scores were examined for each group of 45 students in each of the three I.R.I.T. cycles. When examining differences between expected post-test scores and actual post-test scores, the evidence indicates that student improvement can be attributed to the Program and is not just a normal and natural gain.

Another key method of evaluating student improvements has been through comments of parents, teachers, and other personnel who work with I.R.I.T. students at their own schools. On-going conciliation between the I.R.I.T. staff and these people, both during and following an I.R.I.T. cycle, have demonstrated that the I.R.I.T. Program has made outstanding changes in student attitudes about reading.

First Cycle
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. Total Reading Ability

The results of the California Achievement test show that 63 percent of the students showed gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

Using a t-test, the results were significant at the .01 level of significance.

2. Comprehension

The results show that 59 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .05 level of significance.

3. Vocabulary

The results show that 67 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .01 level of significance.

4. Mean Scores

	Pre-Test Mean	Expected Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Mean
Total Reading Ability	2.00	2.143	2.428
Vocabulary	2.043	2.121	2.479
Comprehension	1.64	1.76	2.06

5. Student Breakdown

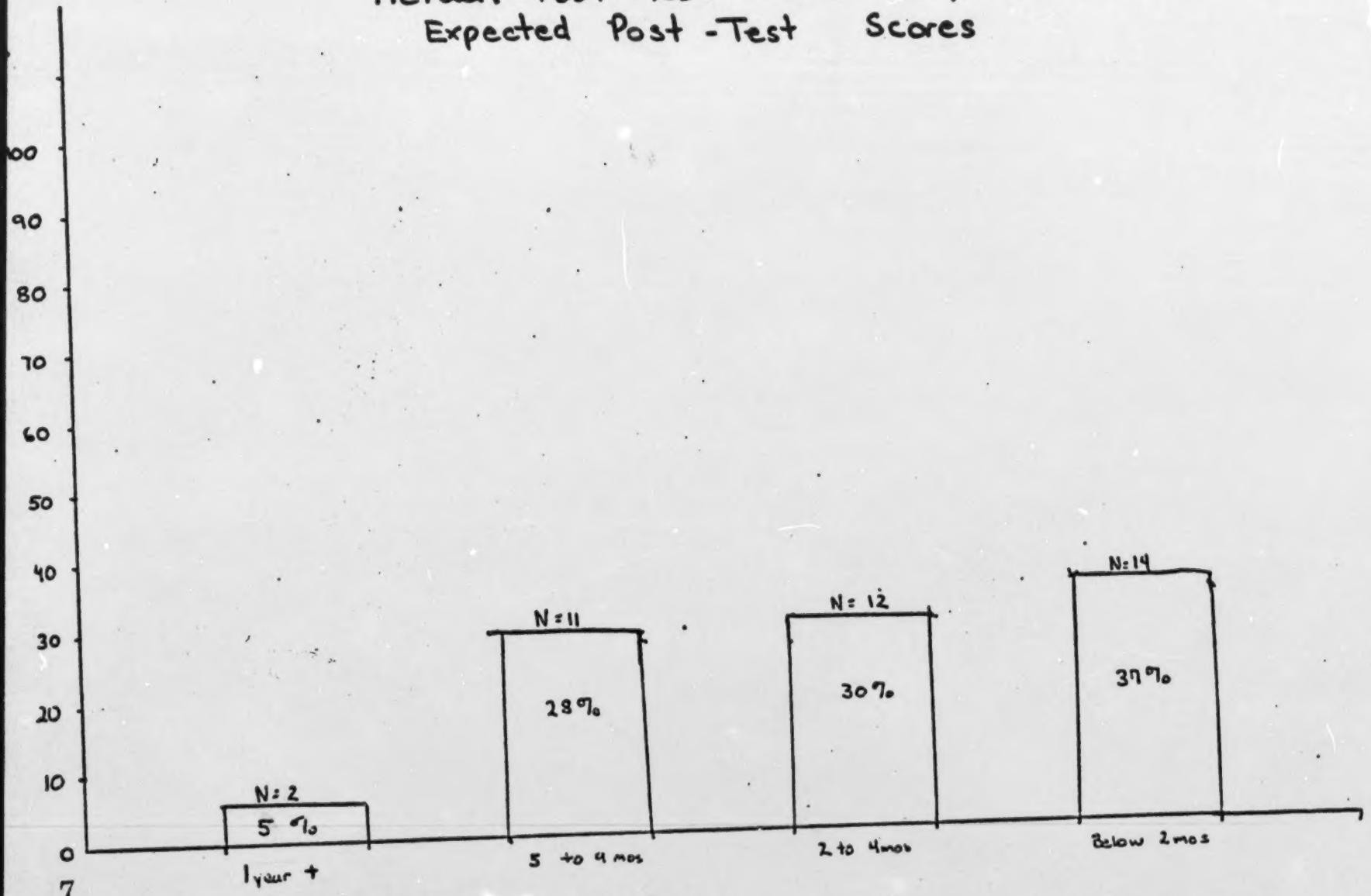
Number of black students	= 15	Number of 3rd graders	= 28
Number of white students	= 24	Number of 4th graders	= 11
Public school students	= 40	Actual number of students tested	= 39
Parochial school students	= 0	Number of students that did not complete cycle	= 5

All students in the first cycle came from King School.

6. Actual number instructional days = 39

FIRST CYCLE - Total Reading Scores (GAINS MADE BY STUDENTS)

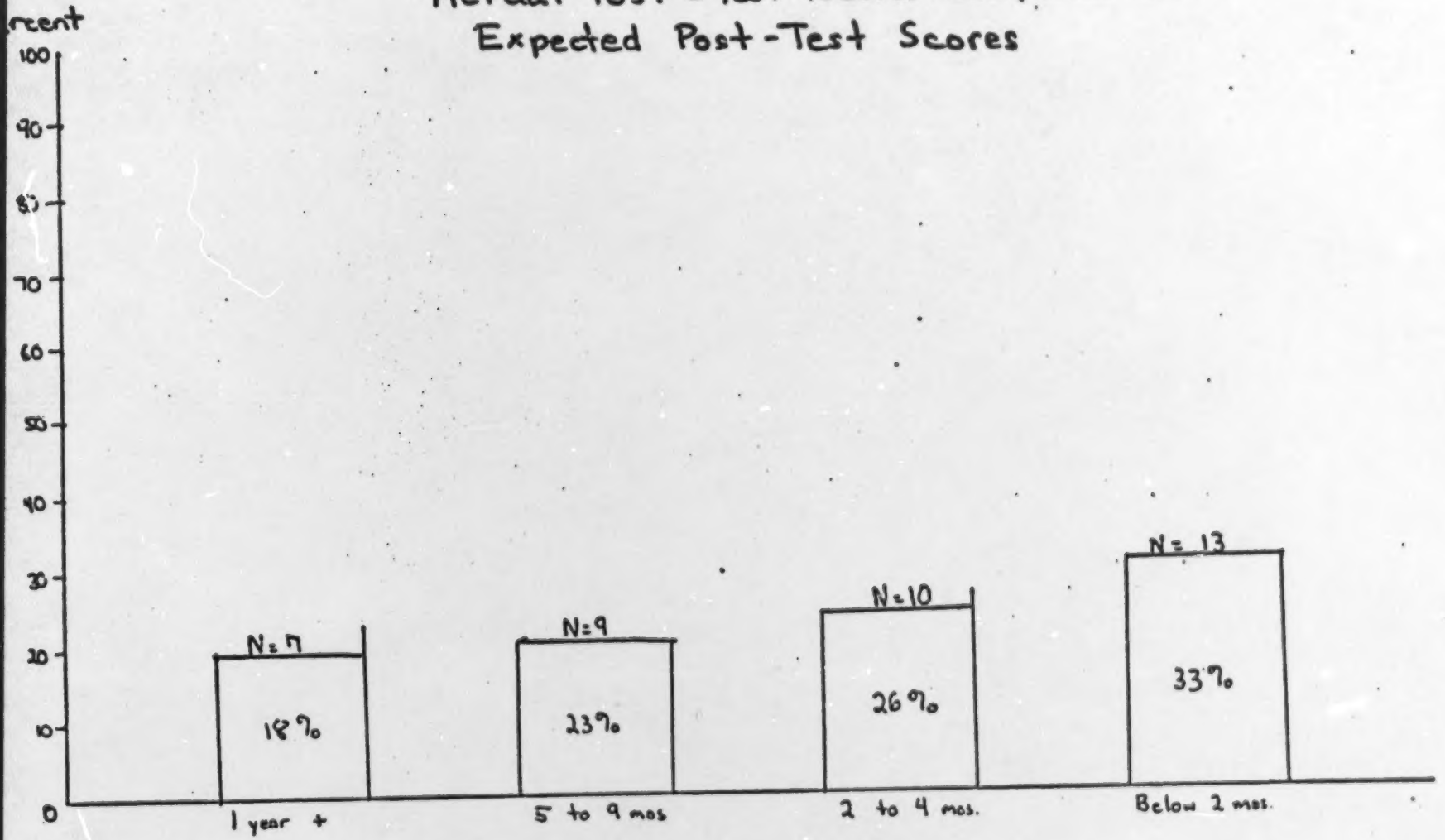
Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of Students = 39

First Cycle - Vocabulary (Gains Made By Students)

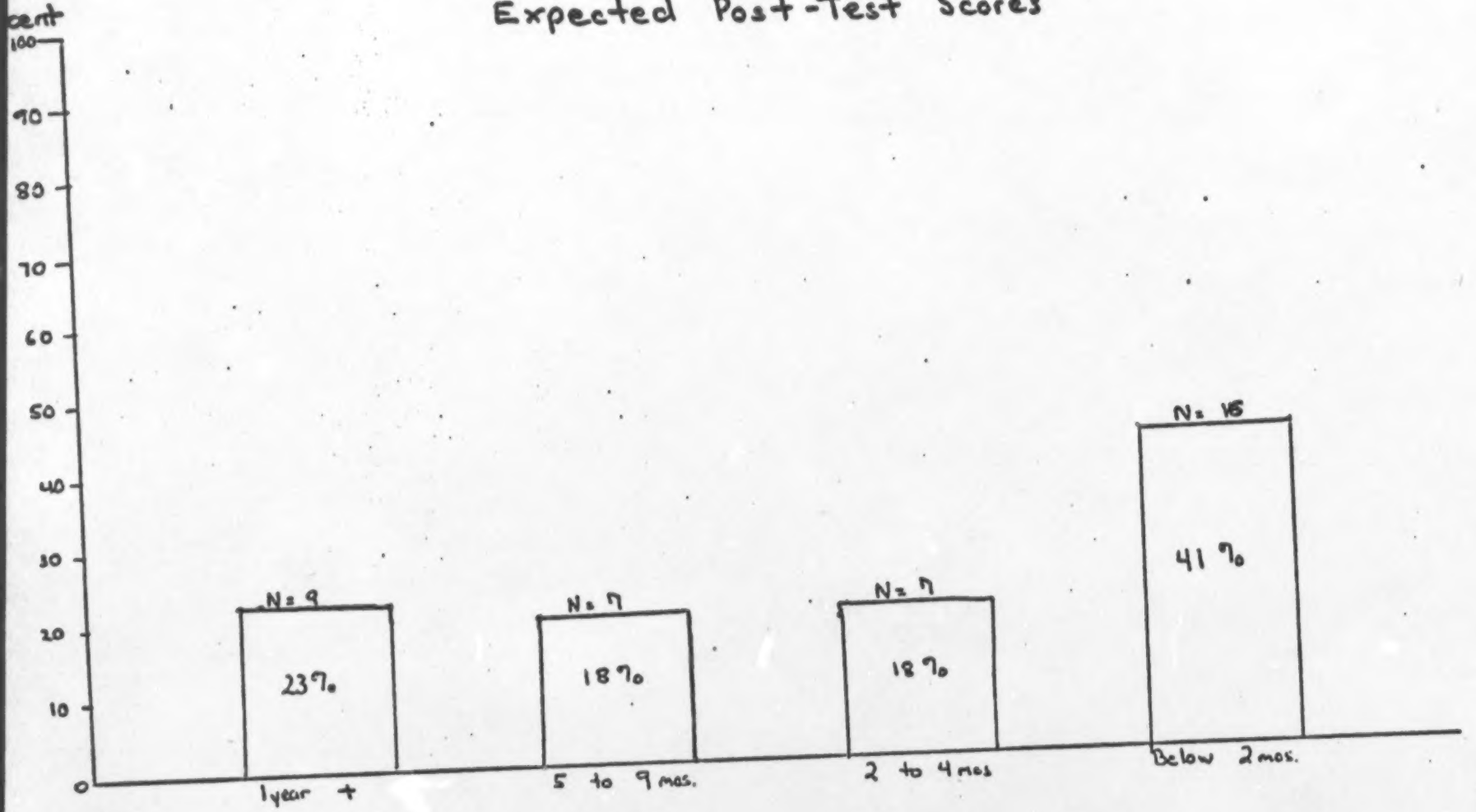
Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of students = 39

First Cycle - Comprehension (Gains Made By Students)

Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of students = 39

Second Cycle
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. Total Reading Ability

The results show that 55 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .01 level of significance.

2. Comprehension

The results show that 55 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .01 level of significance.

3. Vocabulary

The results show that 51 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .05 level of significance.

4. Mean Scores

	Pre-Test Mean	Expected Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Mean
Total Reading Ability	2.60	2.71	2.99
Vocabulary	2.61	2.73	2.86
Comprehension	2.59	2.77	3.00

5. Student Breakdown

Number of black students	= 6	Number of 3rd graders	= 28
Number of white students	= 39	Number of 4th graders	= 17
Public school students	= 29	Actual number of students tested	= 45
Parochial school students	= 16		

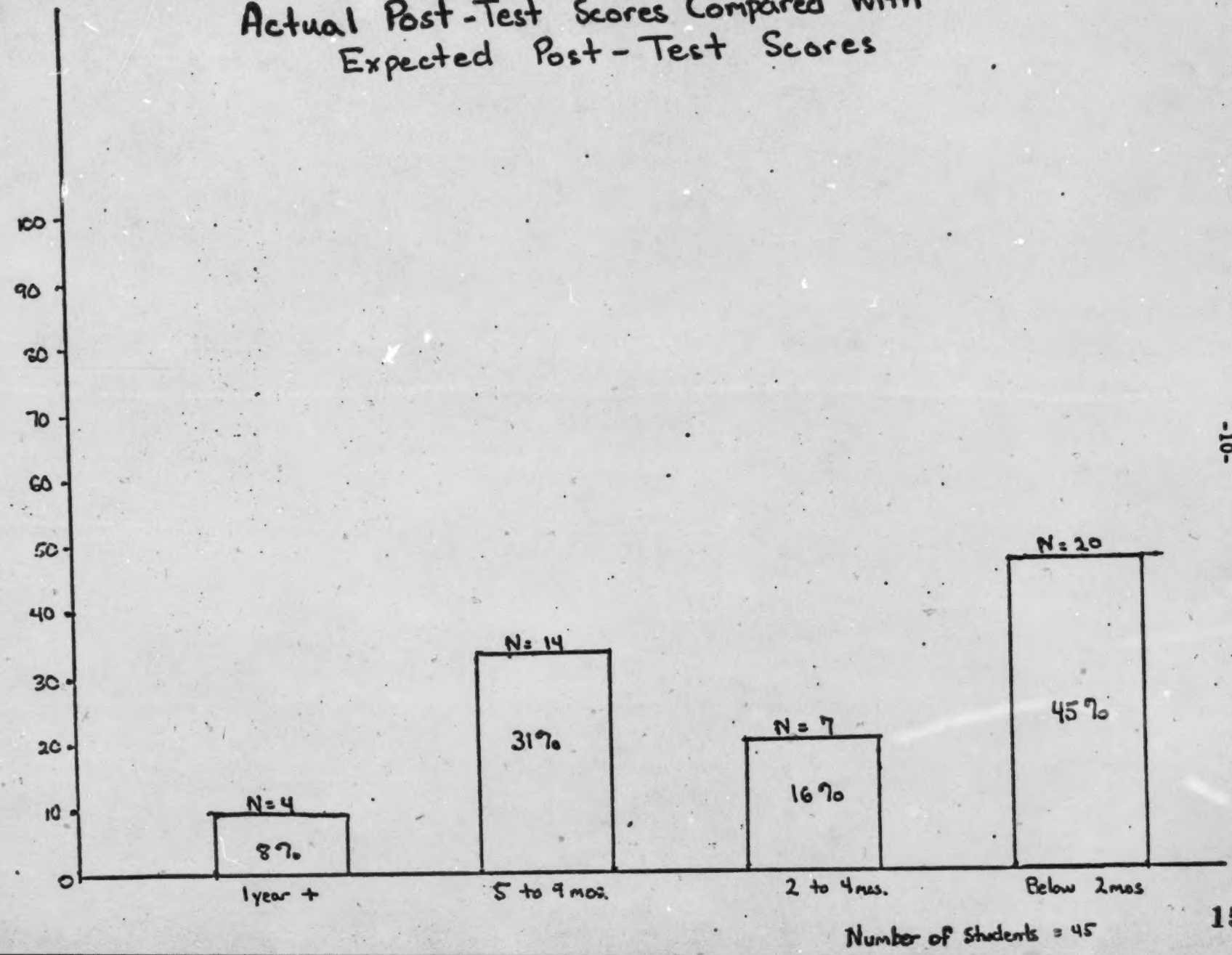
The following is a breakdown according to schools:

	Number of students
King	14
Riverside	7
Yates	8
St. Anthony's	6
St. Luke's	10
	45

6. Actual Number of Instructional Days = 45

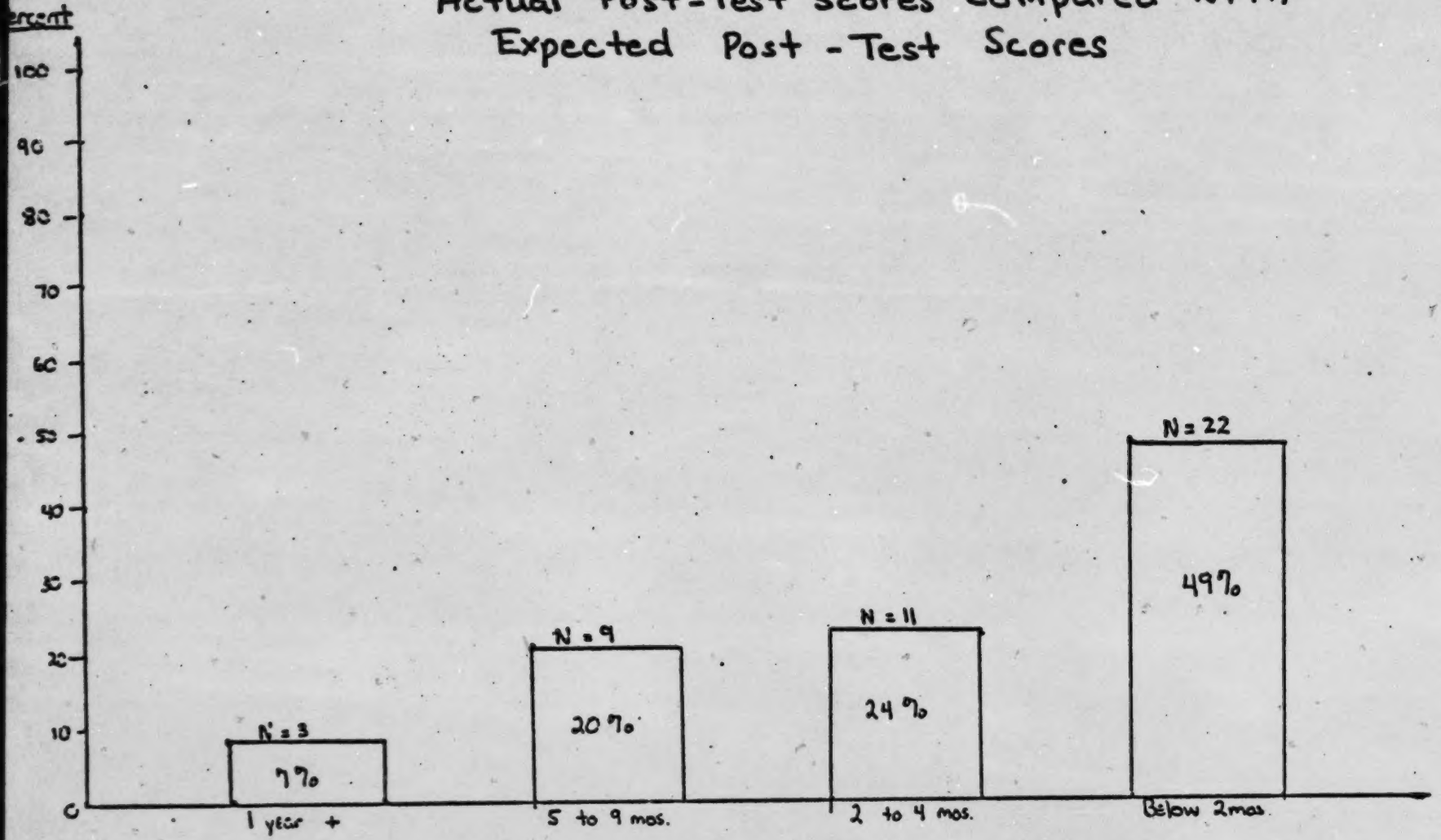
Second Cycle - Total Reading Scores (Gains made by students)

Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Second Cycle - Vocabulary Scores (Gains made by students)

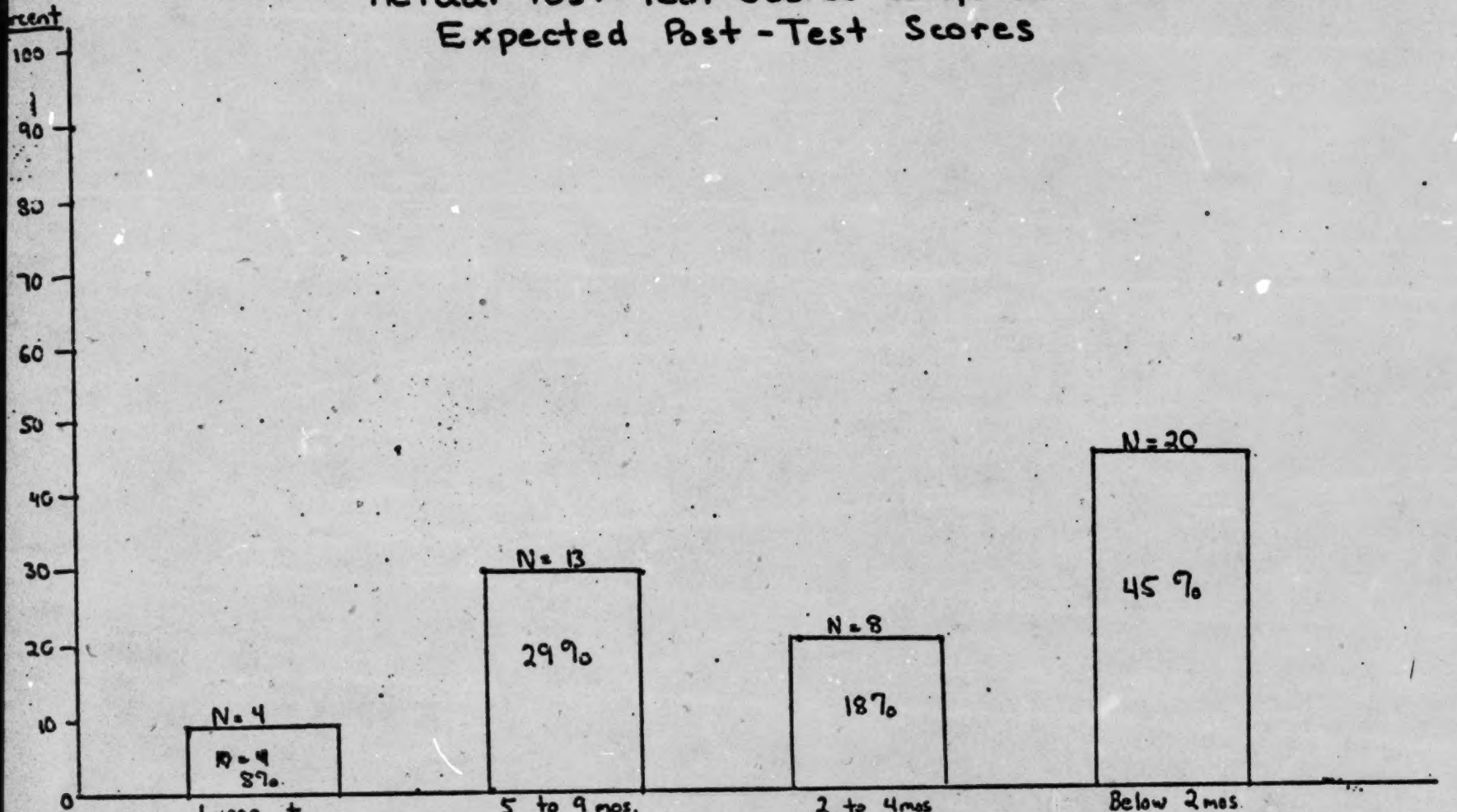
Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of Students = 45

Second Cycle - Comprehension (Gains Made By Students)

Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of Students = 45

Third Cycle
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. Total Reading Ability

The results show that 64 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .01 level of significance.

2. Comprehension

The results show that 68 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .01 level of significance.

3. Vocabulary

The results show that 61 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

These results were significant at the .05 level of significance.

4. Mean Scores

	Pre-Test Mean	Expected Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Mean
Total Reading Ability	2.3	2.43	2.84
Vocabulary	2.34	2.48	2.71
Comprehension	2.24	2.38	2.95

5. Student Breakdown

Number of black students	= 6	Number of 3rd graders	= 33
Number of white students	= 38	Number of 4th graders	= 12
Public School students	= 42	Actual number of students tested	= 44
Parochial School students	= 2	Number of students that did not complete cycle	= 1

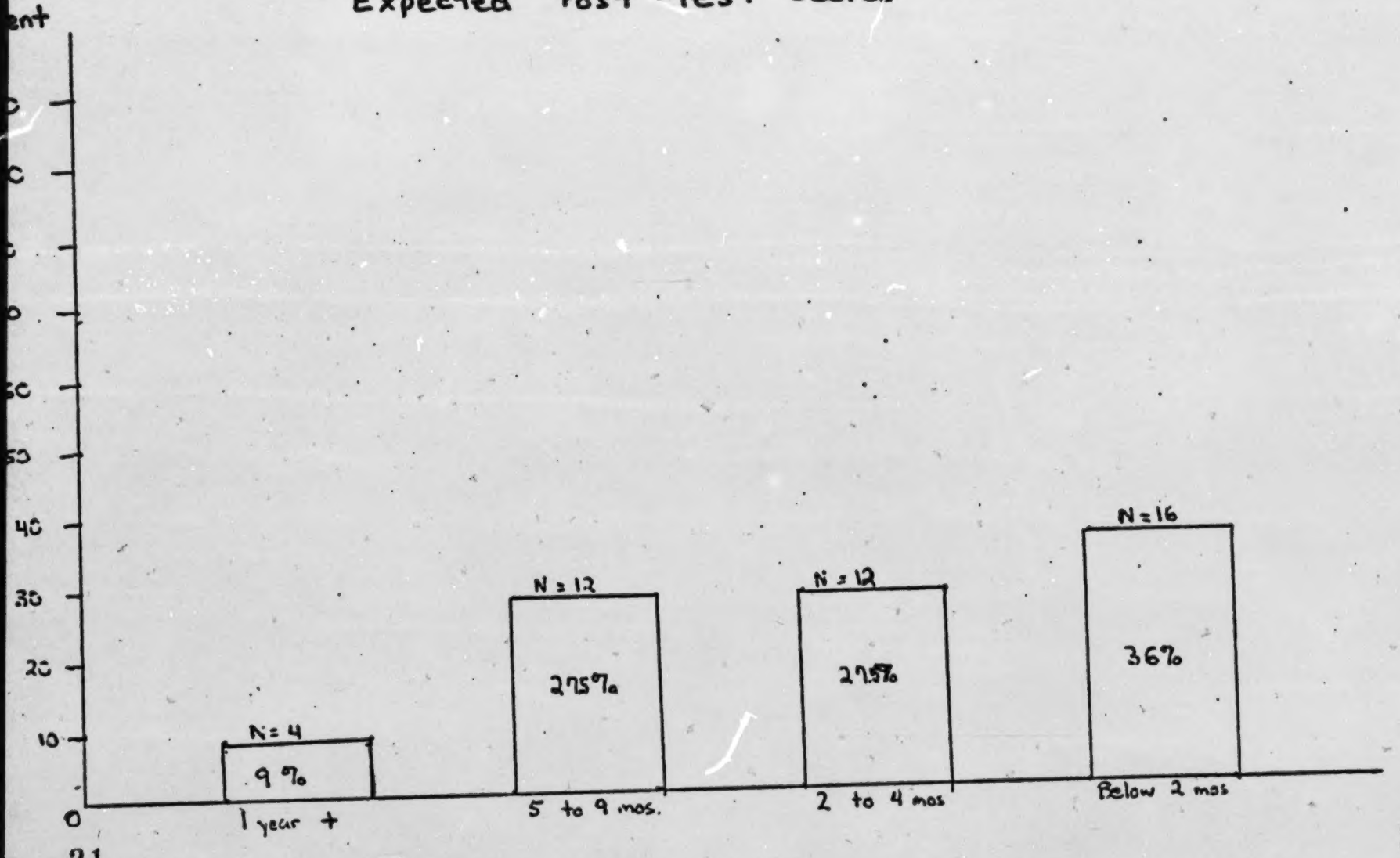
The following is a breakdown according to schools:

	Number of students
King	11
Hamilton	8
Grout Park	12
Pleasant Valley	11
St. Luke's	2
Total	44

6. Actual Number of Instructional Days = 45

Third Cycle - Total Reading Scores (Gains made by students)

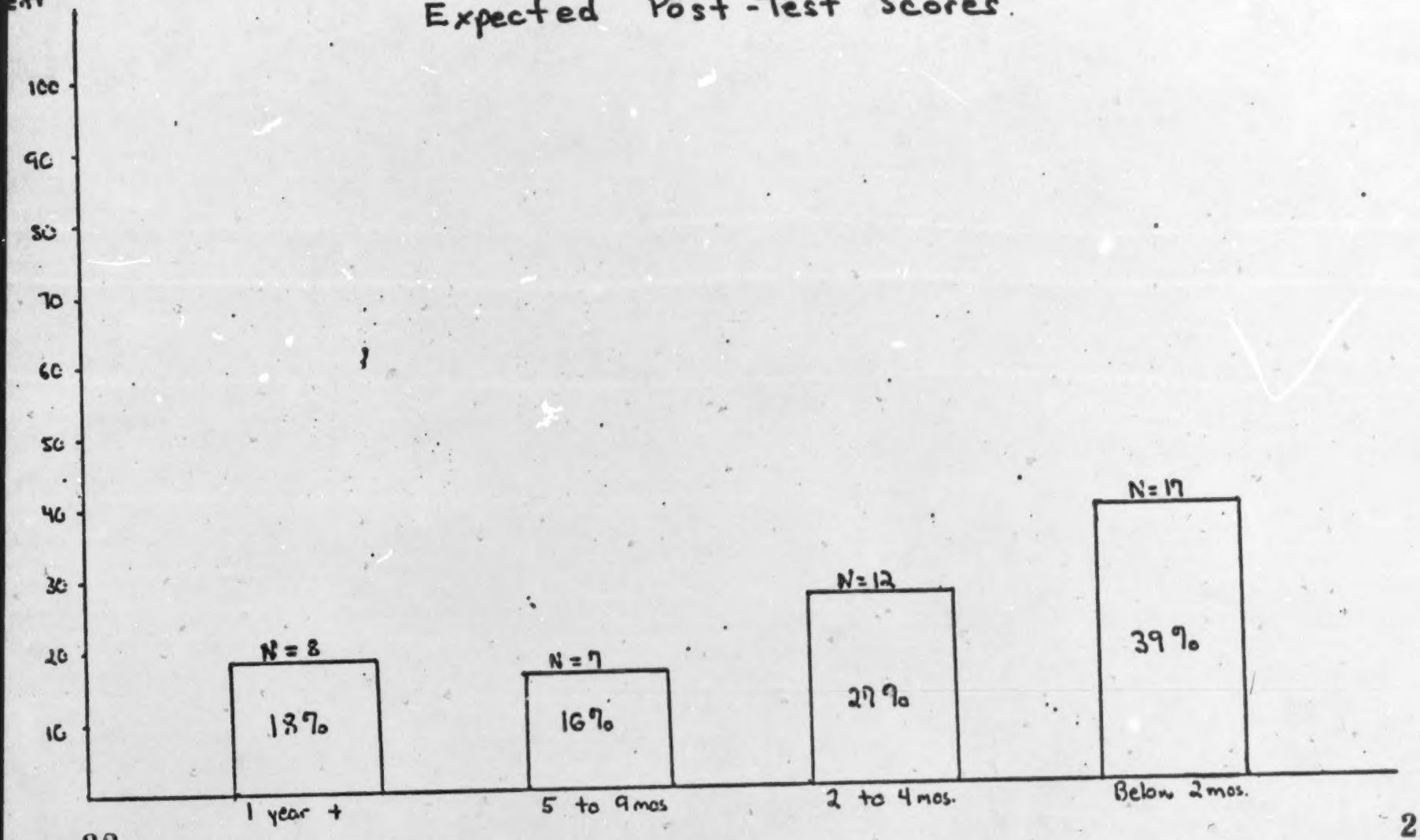
Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of students = 44

Third Cycle - Vocabulary (Gains made by students)

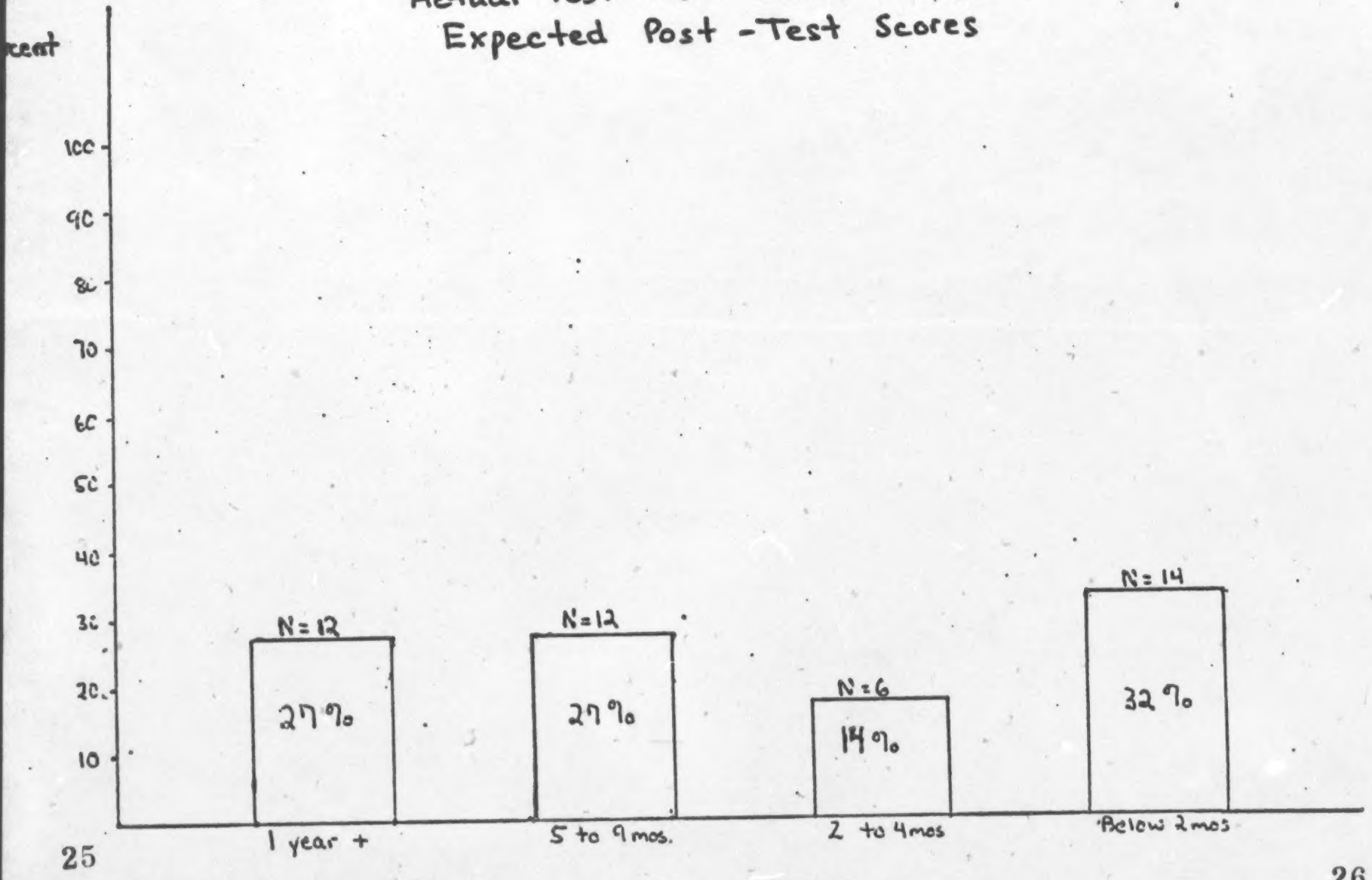
Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores.



Number of students = 44

Third Cycle - Comprehension (Gains made by students)

Actual Post-Test Scores Compared With Expected Post-Test Scores



Number of students = 44

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Total Population

1. Total Reading Ability

The results show that 61 percent of students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

2. Comprehension

The results show that 61 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

3. Vocabulary

The results show that 60 percent of the students made gains of two months and better over their expected scores.

4. Mean Scores

	Pre-Test Mean	Expected Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Mean
Total Reading Ability	2.30	2.43	2.67
Vocabulary	2.33	2.52	2.54
Comprehension	2.16	2.42	2.81

5. Student Breakdown

		Percent
Total Number of black students	= 27	21%
Total Number of white students	= 102	79%
Total Number	129	
Total Number tested	128	
Total Number of Public School Stu.	111	86%
Total Number of Parochial Sch. Stu.	18	14%

Six students were dropped from the program:

4 moved out of district
1 was an attendance problem
1 had poor health

The following is a breakdown according to schools:

	Number of Students	Percent
King	65	50%
Grout Park	12	10%
Pleasant Valley	11	9%
St. Luke's	12	10%
Yate's	8	6%
Hamilton	8	6%
Riverside	7	5%
St. Anthony's	6	4%
Total	129	100%

6. Actual number of instructional days = 129

7. Breakdown according to sex:

	Boys	Girls
First Cycle	13	26
Second Cycle	25	20
Third Cycle	24	20
	62	66

8. Breakdown according to Grade level

	3rd Graders	4th Graders
First Cycle	28	11
	28	17
	33	12
	89	40